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REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

This is intended as a full and complete response to the Office Action dated November 24, 2004.

Original Claim 11 has been canceled and rewritten in independent form as newly added Claim 12.

The Examiner has rejected Claims 1 to 9 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as being anticipated by St. Clair et al, U.S. Publication No. 2003/0176574 (hereinafter "St. Clair et al"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

St. Clair et al do not anticipate Claims 1 to 9 of the present application since the polymer disclosed in St. Clair et al differs from that of the present invention. More specifically, St. Clair et al disclose a controlled distribution block copolymer (S-EB/S-S type polymer; see Table 9 of St. Clair et al). The polymer of the present invention differs from that of St. Clair et al in that the polymer of the present invention is an S-EB-S type polymer. While St. Clair et al also disclose S-EB-S polymers in a VOC exempt solvent as a comparative example (see SEBS #2 in Example 9 and Table 9), this polymer also differs from the polymers of the present invention in that it has a large midblock (for SEBS #2 the hydrogenated polybutadiene midblock has a number average molecular weight of about 65,000). The polymer of the present invention must have a relatively small EB midblock and therefore a relatively high polystyrene content as specified in Claim 1, section "a", subsection "iv". Accordingly, the polymers of the present invention and those of St. Clair et al are not the same.

In addition, there is no teaching or suggestion within St. Clair et al that would lead one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the disclosure of St. Clair et al to achieve a low viscosity, high solids content coating having low levels of volatile organics compounds as

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in the present invention. St. Clair et al simply disclose different polymers that happen to be in one or more solvents which happen to be VOC-exempt.

In view of the above, Applicant maintains that St. Clair et al fail to anticipate or render obvious Claims 1 to 9 of the present application. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of Claims 1 to 9 be withdrawn.

The Examiner also rejected Claim 10 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (a) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as obvious over St. Clair et al, U.S. Publication No. 2003/0176574 (hereinafter "St. Clair et al" as noted above). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicant maintains that Claim 10 of the present application is patentable over St. Clair et al for the same reasons noted above with regard to Claims 1 to 9. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of Claim 10 be withdrawn in view of the arguments presented above.

The Examiner has objected to Claim 11 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. The Examiner indicated that Claim 11 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Accordingly, Applicant has cancelled Claim 11 and redrafted this claim in independent form as newly added Claim 12.

Claims 1 to 10, and newly added Claim 12, are presented for reconsideration. In view of the above remarks and amendments, Applicant respectfully submits that the claims are now in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of the claims are requested. Allowance of these claims is earnestly solicited.

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Respectfully submitted,

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